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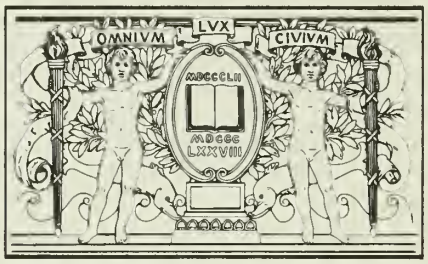

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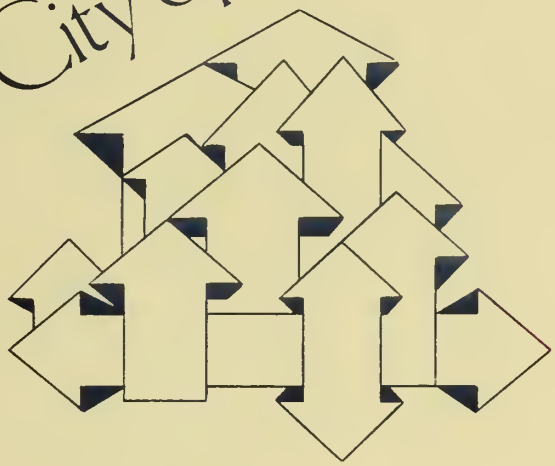
Management of Family Housing Crisis in the City of Boston



UCPC
human services planning

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THE MANAGEMENT OF FAMILY HOUSING

CRISIS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

BY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors of this report owe a debt of gratitude to a wide variety of individuals. The generous sharing of information by the clergy and agency staff who responded to our questionnaire made it possible for us to draw a clear picture of housing crisis management in Boston.

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CHAPTER 1 - HOW THIS STUDY WAS PREPARED

During the Spring of 1977 a report on Emergency Services was prepared as part of the Service Profiles project. Subsequently, another brief study of homelessness in Massachusetts cities outside of Boston was conducted. Through these two studies United Community Planning came into contact with many individuals and organizations interested in the problem of homelessness.

Among these organizations was the Downtown Ministries Task Force, an ad hoc association of church and lay people who, with a few social agency staff members, met once a month to exchange information about available shelters, free meals and related matters.* In November of 1978 this group asked United Community Planning to provide it with planning assistance.

The particular concern expressed by the Downtown Ministries at that time was the lack of suitable shelters in Boston for families which included an adult male or boy over 12. The Chardon Street Home, operated by the Department of Public Welfare, will not accept any boy over the age of eleven and a half. Other shelters had similar restrictions, although the age limit differed. Churches and social agencies reported that they were purchasing room in downtown hotels or at the Charlestown YMCA for such families or requesting that the families "split up" so that members could be housed in single-sex shelters.

A more general concern of the group was that they perceived certain agencies .. notably the Boston Housing Authority and the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare ... as being unresponsive to the needs of families who had no place to live.

In preparing to address these issues the staff of United Community Planning sought to gather information from as many sources as possible. We wished to find out how many families were requesting help with housing problems from churches and social agencies. We also wished to find out why these families needed help and what systems existed to relieve their problems.

Between the end of January and the beginning of May three simultaneous fact-gathering efforts were carried out.

-- A case reporting system through which Salvation Army, Traveler's Aid, Greater Boston Family Service and the Catholic Charitable Bureau provided data on specific families.

-- A survey of Boston churches and social agencies requesting information on the number of families who sought temporary housing between September 1, 1978 and February 28, 1979.

*The organization is now called Social Action Ministries of Greater Boston.

-- A series of interviews with staff of private and public agencies knowledgeable about the management of housing crises provided insights into the service system.

These research efforts have carried us beyond the issue of how specific families may find temporary housing during an emergency to broader questions of how our community manages various types of housing crises. In the pages which follow we shall try to describe the existing systems which respond to families in dire need of housing and the strains which are besetting these systems.

CHAPTER 2 - THE COMPONENTS OF A FAMILY HOUSING CRISIS

The need for a place to live ... to place one's bed, cook one's food, shelter one's children and store one's possessions ... is so elemental that to be deprived of it is one of the classic examples of human privation. Many studies have been done of how individuals and families react when forced to move far from their homes as refugees from war or famine. In recent years American and British social scientists have begun to study the psychological responses of persons who have lost homes through a disastrous flood or tornado. And here in Boston we have a heritage of studies stemming from the destruction of the West End ... an event which tragically marked the lives of many families.

In this report we will be dealing not with a single overwhelming disaster ... an event like the Blizzard of 1978 which set into motion a major response by the affected community ... but with a series of small, unrelated "predicaments" as we will call them.* Each involves displacement of a family from the room, apartment or house in which it has been living. Because these predicaments affect only one or at most a few families they produce no rallying of effort by the larger community to relieve immediate distress.

The term "housing crisis" is commonly used by journalists and other commentators to refer to a community-wide shortage of affordable housing which is safe and acceptable to the consumer. In this report we will be using the same term to refer to the specialized type of emergency which faces those families caught in one of these housing predicaments. In fact Boston is currently experiencing a community-wide "housing crisis" in the first sense. By using the term we wish to remind the reader that each individual family must cope with that very shortage under extreme stress and (usually) with no time to prepare itself.

LISTING THE PREDICAMENTS

In the course of our research we have been told of ten different situations which result in persons being forced to leave their homes.

Of these the most common involve some type of "dishousing". This term means that the home itself has been physically destroyed or someone forbids the family to live in the home. Specific types of dishousing are:

1. Burnouts - When people speak of "homeless families" it is often a family which has had a fire in their home which is thought of. Social agencies refer to such families as "burnouts" and it is this term we shall use. In an urban

* The term "predicaments" is borrowed from Milton Mazer, a psychiatrist practicing on Martha's Vineyard who in his writings uses the term to denote personal crises which affect mental health.

community a fire is the classic example of a sudden accident which deprives a family of its place to live. Media coverage of major fires makes the general public more aware of this type of dishousing than any other.

2. Freezeouts - During the winter months landlords may neglect to have oil tanks filled or may allow the heating system to deteriorate to the point of collapse. In a spell of extreme cold, such as we had in February, 1979, pipes in outside walls froze even when furnaces were in good working order. Families in apartments or rooms in which the heat had gone off entirely may seek temporary housing ... although several persons interviewed stressed the fact that ordinarily families preferred to stay while attempting to keep warm by use of stoves, space heaters, etc.

3. Dishousing Because of Flood or Structural Damage - The blizzard of 1978 represented a crisis for many social agencies because of the large number of families whose homes were damaged by wind, weight of snow or flood. However, structural damage serious enough to force out families can occur in other ways. For example cases were reported of vandalism in BHA apartments which forced families to move out.

4. Dishousing Because of Placarding or Government Action - By "placarding" social agencies mean the process by which the Boston Housing Inspectors indicate a building is no longer in inhabitable condition. This takes place only after warnings have been given to the landlord and he has been pressed to make necessary repairs. Dishousing also can take place because of other types of government action, such as landtaking.

5. Families Evicted for Nonpayment of Rent - The circumstances surrounding some evictions indicate that the nonpayment resulted from a general inability to cope rather than a conscious decision. Other evictions take place after substantial rent increases have been asked by landlords.

6. Evictions for Reasons Other Than Nonpayment of Rent - Families living in apartments with short term leases or in which no lease exists may be evicted at any time. For example, a landlord may wish to remodel an entire building ... a project which will render the building uninhabitable for several months. Evictions may also take place for violations of the lease. One agency cited a case in which a landlord evicted a family because it had violated its lease by taking in a burned out family. Thus the agency had to deal with two dishoused families instead of one.

7. Young Mothers Forced Out of Their Homes - A special group of dishoused families is composed of young mothers ... unmarried teenage girls with very young babies who are forced out of the apartments or homes of their parents. This special population was brought to our attention by hospitals and agencies which work with very young pregnant girls. Social service personnel report that when parents have forced out these girls, other housing arrangements must quickly be found.

Other housing crises come about because families have left housing which is still physically sound and available to them. These moves are, however, generally forced by difficult personal circumstances of the following types:

8. Families Fleeing Violence or Constant Turmoil - Because of the public concern about domestic violence there is a general awareness that women must sometimes flee from physical abuse. It is less generally realized that often women take with them one or more children. Usually they fear the children will be injured if left in the home. One hospital reported several instances in which women came to the emergency room with a child who had been beaten and requested shelter for herself and her child. Other family groups request shelter not because they fear violence but because they cannot cope with constant turmoil in the family.

9. Families Newly Come to Boston - The public images of "transient families" are colored with memories of Depression-era migrations and Post World War II population transfers from the South. Currently, however, families newly come to Boston usually are from a different country. They seek housing in restricted geographic areas where other members of their linguistic group reside. There are also families who come to Boston from other New England states or other regions of the nation looking for work. Usually they plan to stay with relatives or friends, but when these plans fall through, as occasionally they do, they come to agencies looking for temporary housing.

10. Families Moving Because of Specialized Medical Problems - Responses from Boston hospitals indicated that social work staff sometimes were involved in searches for new apartments when a family member developed a severe medical problem. One example cited was a family currently living on the 3rd floor of a three-decker which was suddenly confronted with a housing crisis when the mother of the family had a severe heart attack.

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF THESE FAMILIES?

The first and most obvious need of these families is to find immediate shelter. Chapter 4 will contain a detailed discussion of how this need is met in Boston today.

Once the family has been placed in temporary housing a whole range of other needs associated with the housing crisis may become evident. Usually the families which come to the attention of churches and social agencies have low incomes and hence few material resources. Losses caused by fire, flood or vandalism can stagger a family economically. Loss of treasured family photographs, letters or mementos as well as the trauma of the forced move can cause acute depression. Unless the family finds temporary quarters close to its previous home many other practical issues must be dealt with. Included among these are finding new schools for the children, new places to shop, etc.

Finally there is the problem of "rehousing" the family. A family with an adequate income can live for a few days with a relative or friend until they locate a new place to stay. Rental or purchase takes place easily because the family has the cash or a line of credit needed to complete the transaction. Few examples of this type of family appear in our study since this type of family does not usually come to churches or social agencies for help.

Virtually all the clergy and social agency staff interviewed have stressed that their inability to help families rehouse themselves was the most frustrating aspect of their work in this field. In Chapter 5 we will discuss the process of rehousing families in more detail.

First, however, we shall describe the results of our survey and provide an estimate of the number of families who seek help because of a housing crisis.

CHAPTER 3 - HOW MANY FAMILIES IN A HOUSING CRISIS SEEK HELP?

Several persons familiar with the management of housing crises were interviewed when this study began. From these talks it became clear that there were no reliable statistics on the total number of families in need. Therefore, a questionnaire was designed which asked for information on the numbers of families requesting temporary housing during the period September 1, 1978 to February 28, 1979.

In early March this instrument was mailed to 90 churches, 20 hospitals and 104 social agencies in the City of Boston. Included in this mailing were all Little City Halls and Public Welfare Offices. Responses were received from 127 sources for an overall response rate of 59%.

When the home of a family has been destroyed by a fire or other disaster or when the family has been evicted or forced out of a home the immediate response ordinarily takes place in the local neighborhood. As the information flowed in from churches and social agencies it became plain that when a neighborhood was very small geographically (such as Chinatown or the North End) the same families were known to several different sources of help. Thus there was "double counting" in such reports.

Ultimately it proved impossible to make a hard-and-fast decision in each neighborhood as to the extent to which numbers reflected unduplicated demand. For the purposes of this report we have developed an "estimated demand" for each neighborhood. Usually this will be the highest number of cases reported by a single respondent agency or church within a neighborhood. The few departures from this formula will be explained in the specific entries below.

One other interpretive point must be made. While the questionnaire and its covering letter both stressed our desire to count only families in immediate need of temporary housing, our respondents intermingled families who made three somewhat different types of requests ... all of them considered as emergencies by the churches and social agencies.

-- The families who literally had no place to stay and who came to the church or social agency asking for shelter on that very night.

-- The families who had been taken in for a night or two by a friend, a neighbor or the Red Cross but were in need or some other housing arrangement almost immediately. Included among these were families who had lived with friends or relatives for a week or even a month and who had "worn out their welcome".

-- The families who were in some type of temporary housing arrangement and were under no external pressure to leave but who urgently sought help in their search for permanent housing.

To reiterate---churches and social agencies perceive all these families as being in a housing crisis. Primarily this is because of the dramatic nature of so many of the requests they receive. Families who request help in finding new housing may do so only after spending weeks or months of looking "on their own" and finding nothing. Members of such families become disappointed and sometimes very upset when the church or agency cannot provide much tangible assistance.

The following reports from Boston's neighborhoods will show only those families who during a six month period were in a housing crisis and who applied for help to one of the churches or social agencies who replied to our questionnaire. These families represent the "overflow" from this traditional helping system which can no longer absorb all the dishoused and homeless families in Boston.

The reports to follow will summarize the data received from each neighborhood, from maternity homes, from hospitals and from agencies with specialized clientele. In Appendix A the reader will find tables listing the responding churches and agencies and numbers of requests they reported.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD REPORTS

1-BACK BAY AND THE FENWAY

Churches and agencies responding	8
Estimated unduplicated cases	2

Except in the Fenway area this part of Boston is given over to couples without children, students and elderly persons who live alone. Only the Fenway Community Health Center reported seeing as many as two families. Several agencies indicated they continually had demands for temporary shelter from individuals ... street people, alcoholics and deinstitutionalized persons ... but seldom saw families.

2- BEACON HILL/GOVERNMENT CENTER

Churches and agencies responding	5
Estimated unduplicated cases	3

This is "tourist Boston" which is not ordinarily thought of as a residential area at all. Beacon Hill, while it still houses some families, is primarily the domain of couples and individuals. The Freedom Trail Clinic (part of Lindemann Center) reported a large number of requests but it would appear most of these are from homeless individuals. St. Joseph's Church in the West End reported requests from three or four families from the back streets of Beacon Hill.

3- BRIGHTON/ALLSTON

Churches and agencies responding	8
Estimated unduplicated cases	25

In Brighton the churches and social agencies report little demand for temporary housing. The networks of friends and relatives work well and are able to meet the demand. Twenty-five requests reported by the Allston-Brighton Little City Hall were almost entirely from Allston families. Last Winter the Little City Hall took responsibility for coordinating the process of finding temporary housing for families living in uninhabitably cold apartment buildings. They have also seen some burnouts and evictions in Allston over the past six months.

4-CHARLESTOWN

Churches and agencies responding	5
Estimated unduplicated cases	3

Charlestown is a densely-settled island-like community in which there is a tremendous sense of commitment to the support of fellow residents. In the words of one priest "the community always jumps in" when a family is in trouble. The families reported by the John F. Kennedy Family Service Center represent the small overflow from this helping system.

5-CHINATOWN

Churches and agencies responding	4
Estimated unduplicated cases	13

Chinatown is small in area, densely populated and intensely conscious of its own identity. The Chinese American Civic Association has informally assumed responsibility for the management of housing crises in this area. The Chinatown neighborhood usually has not worried about temporary housing because the traditional Neighborhood Network of family responsibility has sufficed. Now as the area is so crowded and the pressures upon the Network so great agencies may soon be forced to establish some type of temporary housing mechanism to supplement the network.

Some buildings being rehabilitated for moderate and upper income housing will further reduce the available stock of apartments for low income families. Families newly come from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia are of particular concern to the community.

6-DORCHESTER-NORTH

Churches and agencies responding	9
Estimated unduplicated cases	50

This neighborhood includes the Uphams Corner section of Dorchester and the Columbia Point housing project. Many Hispanic and black families live in the Uphams Corner section. The existing network of family and friends is now being heavily supplemented by the efforts of a number of churches and social agencies. Denison House, which reported the largest number of requests for

assistance, has listed 30 burned out families among its clients. Hispanic families wish to stay in this neighborhood where language and customs are familiar. The difficulty of locating low-cost apartments, however, forces families to stay with relatives and friends for many months.

7-DORCHESTER-SOUTH

Churches and agencies responding	14
Estimated unduplicated cases	50

South Dorchester is a large geographic area embracing such sub-neighborhoods as Fields Corner, Codman Square, Mattapan, Lower Mills, Neponset and Franklin Field. The 50 cases reported by Dorchester House (in the Fields Corner section) may perhaps not include the 10 families who sought help at the Franklin Field Little City Hall or the 7 seen at Neponset Health Center. We err on the side of caution by estimating only 50 cases.

Many of the churches responding indicated that the local networks are still strong. One priest commented "Someone always takes people in before we get there". However, these support systems based on personal generosity are now under great strain and must be supplemented by the vigorous assistance of churches, social agencies and some health facilities.

8-EAST BOSTON

Churches and agencies responding	4
Estimated unduplicated cases	40

East Boston is literally an island and while it is connected to the rest of the City by tunnels and bridges it maintains a vigorous sense of its own independence. The network of helping friends and neighbors is very strong. Unfortunately East Boston has had, over the years, a series of major fires which have depleted the stock of low-cost housing and placed a great strain on the families who can and will take in others. The East Boston APAC has assumed informal leadership in the housing field and has recruited a number of families who provide temporary housing for others. The only neighborhood count we received was from the East Boston Public Welfare office which mingled individuals and families in a list of 85 cases. We have arbitrarily reduced this number to 40, possibly an underestimate of the number of families who had been in housing crises.

9-JAMAICA PLAIN

Churches and agencies responding	8
Estimated unduplicated cases	40

Churches and agencies located in upper and middle income sections of Jamaica Plain indicated few or no requests for help with housing crises. On the other hand the Martha Eliot Health Center, which serves the Bromley Health project and adjacent areas of Jamaica Plain and Roxbury, reported 40 requests for help. The social work staff of this Center provided this figure after making a special search of their records over the previous six months.

10-NORTH END

Churches and agencies responding	6
Estimated unduplicated cases	24

The North End is small in area and heavily populated. In recent years a number of old buildings have been purchased and renovated for high rent private housing. This process is still going on, further reducing the number of available low cost apartments in the area.

The North End Neighborhood Council has organized the social and health agencies in the North End to respond to emergencies, especially fires. The 24 burnouts reported by the North End Union were victims of only two fires, one of which burned out 16 apartments, the other 8 apartments. These occurred in the summer and fall of 1978. In March of 1979 many of these families were still living with relatives or with warmhearted families recruited by the social agencies. The existing informal Neighborhood Network in the North End was overwhelmed by the first fire. When the second one occurred it was completely unable to absorb the victims. Some families spent weeks moving from one arrangement to another until a temporary placement could be found for them.

The families burned out in the abovementioned fires are for the most part long time residents. They wish to stay in the part of Boston they know and feel comfortable in. The social agencies are cooperating in an intensive hunt for apartments for these families.

Of all the Boston neighborhoods the North End provides the most striking example of a Neighborhood Network in the process of breaking down under the impact of intense demand. There is a long tradition within this community of providing neighborly help. It is clear that this tradition still exists. But the extent of the demand casued by fires, the lengths of time families have been forced to double up and the resultant "using up" of families who previously were happy to provide temporary housing have driven the social agencies to seek other kinds of temporary housing outside of the traditional system.

11-ROXBURY-LOWER

Churches and agencies responding	9
Estimated unduplicated cases	40 families

This neighborhood includes the sub-neighborhoods of Highland Park and Orchard Park-Dudley East. Responses from this neighborhood were often anguished. The Director of Cape Verdean House, near Dudley Square, indicated that this ethnic community has a very strong tradition of helping friends and neighbors in distress but that "everyone who can afford to take in a family already has one living with them". Our estimated figure of 40 cases includes all those reported by Alianza Hispana plus the 10 families reported by St. Patrick's, St. Philip's and St. Francis De Sales churches. These churches tend to supply temporary housing directly using church property, the homes of parishoners and the apartments of staff members. Thus it seemed unlikely they duplicated the Alianza cases.

12-ROXBURY-UPPER

Churches and agencies responding	6
Estimated unduplicated cases	30

This neighborhood includes the sub-neighborhoods of Grove Hall, Egleston Square, Mission Hill and the Blue Hill Avenue district. Larger geographically than Lower Roxbury it also is more varied with a less depleted housing stock. The Egleston Square area is the focus of much of the demand for temporary housing. St. Mary of the Angels Church has assumed informal leadership in the attempt to meet this need. The cases reported by this church, St. Joseph's and Mission Church were combined in the estimated count since churches seldom refer to each other.

13-SOUTH END

Churches and agencies responding	7
Estimated unduplicated cases	40

This historic area of Boston has for many years provided relatively low cost housing for many low income individuals and families. In recent years the purchase and conversion of old buildings into townhouses or high-rent apartments has revolutionized the housing scene in the South End. Fires have further reduced the stock of low rent apartments. As populations have changed the pre-existing networks of neighbors and friends have frayed or disappeared. Now the churches and social agencies of the South End feel themselves besieged as families burned out, frozen out or evicted turn to them for help. (It should be added that these churches and agencies also see a great many homeless individuals who are also looking for accommodations.)

The Church Street Office of the Department of Public Welfare indicated that it had seen 75-100 cases but this figure included many homeless individuals. We have chosen to use the United South End Settlement count of 40 families as our estimated level of demand.

14-SOUTH BOSTON

Churches and agencies responding	8
Estimated unduplicated cases	30

"In South Boston there's always someone to take you in." Thus, did one priest characterize the people of his parish and of his "town". South Boston has a well-justified reputation as a close community in which persons in trouble can find a helping hand from relatives, friends and neighbors. Here the Neighborhood Network is still vigorous and functioning well.

But there is a less cheerful side to the story. The nun who coordinates parish services for two South Boston churches must continually recruit new host families. A worker in South Boston Action Center pointed out that families who were poor themselves "think twice" about volunteering to assume the financial burden of housing another family. The priest quoted above spends much time personally seeking inexpensive food at groceries and supermarkets in order to help host families feed their guests. While it is still true that in South Boston families undergoing a housing crisis will find neighbors ready to respond, church and agency staff must now spend much time and effort to keep this response system alive.

The South Boston Action Center staff have made an attempt to keep track of new instances of housing crisis in their community. In the six month period for which we requested data they have seen "at least" 30 families. Primarily these were persons burned out of their homes who were temporarily living with friends or relatives but in desperate search of housing of their own.

15-SOUTHWEST BOSTON

Churches and agencies responding	9
Estimated unduplicated cases	15

"Southwest Boston" is a catchall term which covers three distinct neighborhoods: Hyde Park, Roslindale and West Roxbury. In general, these areas provide housing for middle and upper income residents who are less likely to become involved in housing crisis and more likely to have the resources to handle any which occur.

Only in Roslindale did we hear of any substantial demand on agencies for help. We have chosen to use the estimate of 15 cases from the Public Welfare Office in Roslindale. Social work staff at this agency felt that domestic violence was the most common predicament causing housing crises in their community.

16-MATERNITY HOMES

Maternity Homes reporting	2
Estimated unduplicated cases	97

St. Mary's Maternity Home in Dorchester and Crittenton Hastings Home in Brighton were extremely interested in our study since they continually deal with one particular type of housing crisis. Both operate residential facilities where young girls ranging in age from 13 to 18 live while awaiting the birth of their child. After the babies are delivered these new mothers are expected to return to their own families or to go on to some other living arrangement.

These two agencies indicated that between them they could document 97 instances in the preceding six months in which these new mothers were either forced out by their parents or were simply forbidden to return home. Various temporary living arrangements were attempted, such as living with a boyfriend and his family, but often these deteriorated over time. Very young girls with new babies were seen to be living in extremely inappropriate surroundings where they were receiving no real help with the tasks of taking care of their baby.

From our conversations with these two agencies we feel that few of these cases found their way to churches or neighborhood agencies. Thus we feel justified in adding them to the estimated total of families seeking help in the period under study.

17-HOSPITALS-GENERAL AND SPECIALIZED

Hospitals Reporting	17
Estimated unduplicated cases	100

The social service departments of all Boston hospitals, general and specialized, received our questionnaire. A number of these hospitals devoted a great deal of effort to conducting a careful search of their records so that they could document their answers. Since these hospitals were not referring to one another and tended not to refer cases back to community social agencies there was little double counting in these reports. Therefore we feel at least 100 families have been seen by these hospitals.

A number of these families consisted of women and children who had fled from domestic violence. Others were families in which the severe medical problem of one member of the family required all to move. Still others were families who were evicted or burned out while a family member was in hospital. In those instances the hospital social workers became involved since the housing crisis prevented the patient from leaving the hospital even if he or she had no further need for inpatient care.

18-AGENCIES WHICH PROVIDE CITY-WIDE SERVICES

Agencies Reporting	3
Estimated unduplicated count	14

A few agencies which serve residents of all parts of Boston responded to our survey. Boston Children's Service indicated they had 9 requests for temporary housing in one month. Jewish Family Service had rented temporary quarters for 5 Russian immigrant families who had neither friends or relations in Boston.

TABLE I

SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED UNDUPLICATED CASES OF
FAMILIES IN A HOUSING CRISIS WHO SOUGHT HELP FROM A CHURCH, AGNECY OR HOSPITAL.

September 1, 1978 - February 28, 1979

NEIGHBORHOOD RESPONDENTS		ESTIMATED UNDUPLICATED CASES
Back Bay and the Fenway	2	
Beacon Hill, Government Center, Downtown	3	
Brighton/Allston	25	
Charlestown	3	
Chinatown	13	
Dorchester-North	50	
Dorchester-South	50	
East Boston	40	
Jamaica Plain	40	
North End	24	
Roxbury-Lower	40	
Roxbury-Upper	30	
South End	40	
South Boston	30	
Southwest Boston	15	
SUBTOTAL NEIGHBORHOODS		405
Maternity Homes	97	
Hospitals	100	
City-wide Agencyes	14	
TOTAL-ALL RESPONDENTS		616

SUMMARY

It should be remembered that Table I provides a very minimal estimate of the total demand for assistance by families in the midst of a housing crisis. On the face of it 616 does not seem an overwhelmingly large figure. If it is assumed that the cases occur at an even rate we may say at least 100 families a month ... or 23 a week ... turn to Boston agencies, churches, hospitals or maternity homes for help in a housing crisis.

In the succeeding chapter we will consider how these families are assisted and what "response systems" are already in place in our community to meet these individual housing crises.

CHAPTER 4 - HOW IS THE NEED FOR IMMEDIATE SHELTER MET?

THE NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK

Perhaps the most encouraging finding of our survey was the consistent affirmation from all parts of Boston that "people here all try to help each other." In recent years social scientists have conducted a number of studies relating to the amount and quality of support individuals in trouble receive from family, neighbors and friends. Often this is referred to as a "personal support network." In this report we use the term "Neighborhood Network."

This indigenous emergency response network is based upon the simple human tradition of helping one's neighbors in trouble. One would assume that this tradition would assure us that all in need would be taken in, given shelter, fed and clothed should they be driven from home by fire, flood, eviction or physical abuse. Indeed at first glance this might appear so self-evident as not to require extensive documentation. The data from our survey do confirm it ... far more families spontaneously shelter with friends and neighbors than in free or low cost temporary housing. Yet at the same time, evidence came to light that in several parts of the City, the Neighborhood Networks were simply unable to absorb all the families in need of help and that other types of emergency arrangements had to be made through the efforts of churches and social agencies.

The difficulty facing the Neighborhood networks under strain is one of over-demand for both temporary and permanent housing. The most dramatic example is seen in the North End. In this community there are a number of families burned out of their apartments in the summer of 1978 who were still living with friends, neighbors, relatives or, in some cases, host families in April 1979. Many families in the North End do not have room for another family. Social agencies are continuing to recruit possible host families in the belief that they will be needed if another large fire occurs.

It must be remembered that when a family accepts another into their home at the height of an emergency little thought is given to issues of the length of stay, or the cost of food. From priests, ministers and social agency staff we heard evidence that they were spending substantial amounts of time and funds helping host families with economic and logistical problems stemming from their original generosity. One South Boston priest tries to arrange for additional food stamps when one low income family takes in another. It is by virtue of this type of practical assistance that the Neighborhood Networks in Boston survive.

It should also be pointed out that there remain certain categories of dishoused and homeless families who are often not helped even by strongly organized Neighborhood Networks. Many evicted families find neighbors unsympathetic. Women fleeing from violence and young mothers forced out with their infant by their families often will not be housed because friends and neighbors fear involving themselves in the disputes of another family. (Indeed women fleeing violence often wish to get out of a neighborhood so that their abusive mates cannot locate them.)

The reputation of a family in a neighborhood may also militate against their finding assistance. If one or more of the family members have a history of mental illness, alcoholism or bizarre behavior the family is likely to be rejected entirely or sheltered only overnight.

For these families, for the families newly arrived in a community and for the "overflow" from the existing Neighborhood Networks churches and social agencies must seek alternative types of temporary housing. It is to these alternatives that we now turn.

SHELTER

There are two ways in which social agencies and churches can respond to requests from families who cannot move in with a neighbor or relative. One is to find an available bed in one of the shelters. The other is to pay for a room at one of the available low-cost hotels, residences or Y's.

The majority of free and low-cost facilities maintain some type of restrictions regarding the age and sex of those they will house. These restrictions, which often change and are sometimes interpreted variably by intake staff, are sources of great confusion among social agencies making referrals. The information given in this report represents these rules as they existed in October, 1978. Appendix B provides detailed information about the resources available in Boston.

SHELTERS WITH NO AGE AND SEX LIMITATIONS

Families which include adolescent male children (aged 12-17) and/or adult males (aged 18 or over) and who wish to remain together have only two shelters available.

One of these is not recognized as a shelter in the normal sense of the term. The Project Place office in the South End is open all night to persons who cannot find any place else to stay. Individuals coming there must be accepted by overnight staff. Couches and chairs are the only sleeping accommodations.

The Salvation Army's Roxbury Corps Center contains four apartments which are available to families in crisis for $7.00 a night. Staff screens applicant families before they are accepted for residence. Usually these apartments are full but agencies and churches continually call in the hope of finding one vacant. Salvation Army staff work with clients who are resident in order to find them permanent housing.

FREE SHELTERS WITH SOME AGE AND SEX LIMITATIONS

There are three free shelters which house women with young children (under the age of 12). Adolescent boys are not accepted at any of these facilities.

The largest is the Temporary Home for Women and Children operated by the Department of Public Welfare at New Chardon Street in the Government Center. Most (although not all) women accepted for residence are receiving Public Welfare benefits. Unfortunately, Department rules prevent them from receiving checks while living in the shelter. This regulation makes it much more difficult for these families to rehouse themselves.

Casa Myrna Vasquez in the South End has as its primary mission the provision of shelter to Hispanic women. While often referred to as a shelter for "battered women" a majority of their clients come to them because of other predicaments. Approximately one quarter of the women applying for residence have one or more children with them.

Transition House, while it operates in Cambridge, is considered a major resource by all Boston agencies and churches. It is primarily interested in serving women fleeing domestic violence. It also accepts children to the age of 12.

It should be noted that these shelters have other limitations on their intake. For example, several screen out women actively addicted to alcohol or drugs. These requirements, while quite understandable in view of the programmatic aims of the shelters, further limit the options of social agencies and churches seeking temporary housing for families.

There are five shelters in Boston which will accept adult men and/or women but not children. In most cases the age of 18 is used as a demarcation point.

Shelter, Inc., which operates in Central Square, Cambridge and Harborlights in the South End accept both men and women. At one time both accepted married couples but they have changed their policies in this regard.

Sancta Maria in the South End will accept only adult women. While used by homeless women of all kinds it is especially attractive to street people and transients.

Rosie's Place in the South End is primarily identified as a shelter for homeless transient women with no children. Some of their clients are deinstitutionalized mental patients who have wandered away from their original placements.

Pine Street Inn is, at this time, a large all-male shelter in the South End. When it moves to new quarters it will have a 50-bed unit for homeless women. While many Bostonians think of Pine Street as primarily a shelter for alcoholics it also shelters many other types of homeless men.

HOW THE SCARCITY OF FREE FAMILY SHELTERS AFFECTS CHURCHES AND SOCIAL AGENCIES

When families cannot find a temporary place to stay within the Neighborhood Networks, the church or agency staff trying to help them must find out the ages of all males in the family. For those families in which there is a father as well as a mother or in which one of the children is a boy over 12 the only feasible free alternative is the Salvation Army's Roxbury Corps Center.

Families willing to split up can find free shelter. The women, small children and adolescent girls going to the Temporary Home, the adult men to Pine Street and adolescent boys to Place Runaway House. Churches and agencies usually wish to continue working with the family toward a more permanent solution of their problems and find that splitting up the family makes continued concerted action far more difficult. Furthermore, splitting up the family in the midst of a crisis will place an added psychological strain on a family already dealing with considerable stress. Thus, in the end, these families who cannot be placed either in the Networks or in free shelters are usually placed in low-cost rented rooms.

MOST COMMONLY USED LOW-COST RENTED QUARTERS

When churches and social agencies seek to rent temporary housing they must be concerned with the issue of cost. Although in theory any hotel or motel in the city could be used in an emergency situation, in practice there are three which have continually been mentioned to us as the most commonly used.

The most economical is the Charlestown Armed Services YMCA which is primarily a residence for military personnel and their families. When rooms are available they ordinarily cost $11.00 per day for a married couple. Extra cots are set up in the rooms to accommodate children. This rate does not include food. Social agencies pay the cost of three meals eaten in the restaurant in the building.

The rates charged by various hotels continually change. In October 1979, the Avery charged $28.00 for two persons, the Essex $34.00 and the Bradford $44.00.

There are two other low cost facilities available for very specialized populations. One is the Beacon Hill Friends House which charges $9.00 - $14.00 a night to individuals and families who are visiting patients in local hospitals. In practice, this facility is primarily used by persons visiting from some other part of the nation.

Elizabeth Stone House in Jamaica Plain will accept women with children at a very low rent. However, it is limited to women in situations of emotional distress who must commit themselves to making changes in their lives during their stay.

RENTED QUARTERS WHICH WILL NOT ACCEPT FAMILIES OR COUPLES

The YMCA's and YWCA's serving Boston and Cambridge will not accept children since they are all single-sex facilities and cannot be used for couples. There are several low cost residences for women, such as Bethany Union, Our Lady's Guild House and Saint Helena's which also will not accept children. Beacon Chambers is a low cost residence for men which will not accept children.

HOW CHURCHES AND SOCIAL AGENCIES SEEK FUNDS TO PAY FOR RENTED QUARTERS

Our questionnaire asked if respondents provided money for temporary housing. The answers made it clear that very few had funds immediately available. In some instances this represented a reluctance on the part of the agency or church to provide financial support to actual or possible Public Welfare recipients. In others the church or agency had a tradition of spending money on other categories of need, such as food. In still others the existing funds for emergency purposes had been drained away by chronic demand.

Neighborhood organizations and churches often work together to find the money needed for a rental arrangement. Several respondents indicated that coordination of such efforts was often time consuming. A family housed in a hotel might be "picked up" by a succession of agencies ... but only after intensive efforts by the agency responsible for managing the case.

The Greater Boston Red Cross rents hotel rooms for many families dishoused because of fires or other natural disasters. Agency policy requirements limits this payment to 2 or 3 days, however. Families must then find some other temporary housing either with a friend, a relative or in a shelter. Churches and social agencies sometimes "pick up" these hotel rentals for a limited period of time.

The Department of Public Welfare will provide Emergency Assistance funds to help families dishoused because of fire, flood or natural disaster. This money will be made available even if the client is not currently a Public Welfare recipient. Such a family can be temporarily housed in a hotel or motel at the expense of the Department if the social worker requests such an expenditure and the Regional Director approves it.

Because rooms at hotels and YMCA's represent a substantial drain on the resources of churches and social agencies they try to locate other types of temporary housing for families whose rent they are paying. Sometimes they can relocate into permanent housing. In many parts of Boston, however, apartments for low income families are so hard to come by that the family must move twice .. first to the home of a host family recruited by the agency and then to a permanent dwelling place.

In the next chapter we will discuss the ways in which churches and social agencies seek to help families rehouse themselves and the various problems which arise in connection with these efforts.

CHAPTER 5 - THE PROCESS OF REHOUSING FAMILIES

As we pointed out in Chapter 2 very few middle or upper income families need church or agency help to find either temporary or permanent housing. Thus these helping agencies are dealing almost exclusively with the problems attendant to finding some type of housing for low income families.

When this report was orginally planned, we intended to discuss only the ways in which families found temporary housing on an emergency basis. However, the responses to our questionnaire and conversations with numerous agency staff convinced us that they saw their task as only half completed when they found some type of temporary assignment for a family. Almost universally they felt an obligation to help the family rehouse itself on some permanent basis. Since this was defined as part of the service by almost all the service providers we began to develop information on how the rehousing effort took place.

To oversimplify the situation somewhat it can be said that for a low income family involved in a housing crisis, the programs of the Boston Housing Authority ... the large family developments and a small number of subsidized apartments ... represent the most significant possible source of housing. This housing is a great bargain since rents are set at one-quarter of a family's income no matter what it might be. If, however, the Boston Housing Authority rejects the contention that the family is an "emergency case" within their meaning of the term, or if they fail to provide an apartment in a timely fashion for any of a number of other reasons the family must turn to an increasingly problematic private housing market.

SEEKING HOUSING FROM THE BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Boston Housing Authority has under its control approximately 14,000 units of housing for families. Those considered habitable are almost entirely occupied. For most developments there are long waiting lists. Many units ... the exact number is disputed ... are no longer considered habitable because of vandalism or disrepair.

Families faced with a housing crisis may seek housing as "emergency applicants." The application must be made at the Central Office Tenant Selection Department located at 53 State Street in Boston. They must provide the Tenant Selection staff with information that will verify that their income is low enough to render them eligible for public housing. The BHA may also request other documentation such as marriage license, divorce decrees, custody papers, birth certificates and alien registration cards.

In addition the family must document the fact that is "actually or imminently without housing through no fault of its own".* It must also document the fact that:

1- It is unable to locate "adequate, alternative temporary or permanent housing"
2- That "the applicant or a member of the applicant's family was not the cause of the emergency situation".

According to the Authority rules only families dishoused for the following reasons may be considered as "emergency applicants":

1. A disaster (i.e., fire, flood)

2. The existence of exceptionally hazardous substandard conditions which endangers or materially impairs the health, safety or well-being of the applicant AND which cannot be repaired by the landlord AND which results in the condemnation/closing of the property by a public agency.

3. A court-ordered eviction (execution) for causes other than the willful or deliberate failure to pay rent or to carry out other normal obligations of tenancy (a substantial reduction in family's income or an increase in rent beyond the applicant's reasonable ability to pay that resulted in loss of housing may be considered as causes "other than the fault of the applicant").

The Tenant Selection Department conducts an investigation to verify claims that a family has been dishoused as a result of one of these predicaments. Churches and social agencies responding to our questionnaire reported doing a great deal of case advocacy to convince BHA staff that an emergency situation legitimately exists. That staff, for their part, indicate they feel hemmed in by Federal regulations which reduce their flexibility in responding to the emergency needs of families.

The BHA may find certain families ineligible for housing even if an emergency situation has been proven. Families who have been evicted from BHA units within the last two years must have their cases reviewed by Tenant Services and are often rejected. Persons who have "a chronically poor record of meeting their financial obligations ... especially rent and utilities" .. are also eliminated from consideration.

In addition to this investigation of the family's financial stability and money management practices, the Authority must enforce a Federal regulation which requires that they refuse to house any person if he has been convicted of a crime of violence against an individual or a crime involving "extensive damage to property".

*This quote and others in this section are from documents provided to this study by the Tenant Selection and Tenant Services Department of the Authority. We wish to acknowledge the cooperation we have received from the staff of the BHA.

If the family appears eligible and sufficient evidence of an emergency has been documented the case is placed before a staff committee which meets daily to review applications for emergency status. If this committee acts favorably the family is placed upon the "Community-Wide Emergency Priority Waiting List" and is so notified.

In fact there are several waiting lists, one for each apartment size. A Federal regulation requires Tenant Selection staff to apply a mandated formula to each application which is keyed to family size and composition. This formula establishes the number of bedrooms the family needs. Tenant Selection staff cannot accept applications for apartments which are too small for the applying family.

This seemingly obscure regulation plays a vital role in limiting the response of the Boston Housing Authority to emergencies. The BHA has a relatively small stock of habitable three, four and five bedroom apartments and few vacancies occur. Therefore, if the Federal formula indicates that the family requires one of these larger apartments the family is placed on an "Emergency Priority Waiting List" which is very long and is going to move very slowly. In realistic terms large families find that even after they have been granted "emergency priority status" they must remain in some sort of temporary housing for months while they work their way to the top of the list for that particular size of apartment.

Project managers continually inform the Tenant Selection Department of available vacant apartments. As available units are reported the Emergency Status Family at the top of the list for that size apartment is "assigned" the unit. Emergency status families are not offered units in areas where they would feel racially isolated.

Before the family is actually contacted, however, Tenant Selection staff notify the project manager that an apartment (specified by identification number) has been assigned to family X and that it must not be rented to any other family. The family is then called and told it must contact the manager, arrange for a visit to inspect the apartment and sign the lease.

On rare occasions the manager may refuse the assignment of a family to a project for "documented just cause". These refusals usually relate to criminal activities of the type described above.

The designated apartment, like all BHA housing, is offered to the family on a one time no refusal basis. If, for any reason, the family turns down the apartment it has been assigned, it loses its emergency priority status and is placed on the "standard applicant" list in a position determined by its date of application. On rare occasions, when the family refuses an apartment, because of the physical handicap of a family member for example, a family will be offered an alternative apartment.

In reality the pressure upon the family to accept whatever apartment is offered them is intense. It is widely known that the "standard applicant" list for all bedroom sizes is quite long. Refusal may result in losing all opportunity for BHA housing for years to come.

Many churches and social agencies have developed a negative point of view toward the BHA because of the slowness ... as it is seen ... of its response to housing emergencies. In part this is because of a mis-perception of the mission of the BHA. It cannot be viewed as "housing of last resort" for any and all families regardless of size or previous history. On the contrary it has become quite selective in regard to the families it will accept and has developed a deliberate policy of weeding out "problem families".

However, from the point of view of churches and social agencies the most grating fact is the lack of response to the needs of large families. The results of this slowness of response are predictable. Large families staying with relatives, friends or host families "wear out their welcome" over time. Despairing of acceptance by BHA, they seek low-cost housing in the private market. Ironically these apartments, when found and rented, often have fewer bedrooms than those which might eventually be offered by the BHA.

SEEKING APARTMENTS IN THE PRIVATE MARKET

Church and social agency staff often accompany family members to the Boston Housing Authority headquarters to assist them in making an application and to attempt to convince BHA staff that an emergency truly exists. However, the magnitude of these efforts is relatively minor when compared to the energy which the same staff must expend in seeking family housing in the private market. The actual routines by which these agencies attempt to find housing are what one might imagine. Staff continually telephones real estate agents, individual landlords and other social agency staff for "leads". Both city-wide and local newspaper advertisements are scanned. Neighborhood workers, clergymen, health care professionals and social workers all become part time apartment hunters. After a devastating fire in the North End one agency mobilized all the young people participating in its recreational programs to conduct a "street by street search" for vacant apartments in the neighborhood.

Unfortunately, as the Neighborhood Reports in Chapter 3 illustrated, there is a lack of affordable housing for low income families in such parts of the city as Chinatown, the North and South Ends, Dorchester, Roxbury and South Boston. Fires have decimated the housing stock in some of these neighborhoods. New construction and rehabilitation of private properties has usually resulted in apartments available at rents far above what low income families can afford.

Most families wish to find new housing in the neighborhood they are used to. Here they have their friends, they know the stores and neighborhood institutions and their children may have familiar playmates. In some instances non-English speaking families have emigrated to Boston to live in an ethnic enclave which they have seldom left. To relocate such a family in another section of Boston is to subject them to a frightening experience.

Apartments are so difficult to find that it is surprising that churches and social agencies are able to provide any assistance at all. Nonetheless some of our respondents have reported success in a number of cases. Contacts are maintained with friendly real estate agents and landlords. When an apartment is found, agency staff attempt to locate money needed for a deposit or to move goods from storage. Sometimes it is necessary for staff to help with the physical move itself to reap the satisfaction of finally getting a family out of some temporary arrangement and into a permanent home.

THE DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS OF DOUBLING UP

Because Boston Housing Authority response is so often delayed and because apartments are so difficult to locate in the private market, low-income families must often "double up" with friends or relatives for many months. Unfortunately these arrangements sometimes break down. Two families attempting to live in an apartment designed for one inevitably have some frictions. Since the "host" family is likely to be as poor as the "guest" family economic strains exacerbate the psychological ones.

At times a member of the "host" family will come to a church or social agency demanding that "something be done" to resolve the housing crisis. At other times all or part of the "guest" family will be asked to leave or will be forcibly evicted. While such incidents are always regrettable they are especially unfortunate when children are involved. When families are cast out in this way children understand that they and their parents are both unwelcome and powerless to control their fate.

The clergy and social agency staff who responded to our questionnaire stressed the reality of the social and psychological strains which beset families living together over a long period of time. They believe that successfully rehousing families is the only realistic way of preventing the worsening of these problems. It is because they have seen so many major family problems develop as a result of doubling up that they feel so strongly that the provision of temporary housing is not enough and that a major part of their job is to help families rehouse themselves as soon as possible.

CHAPTER 6 - SOME SPECIFIC RESPONSE SYSTEMS FOR SOME SPECIFIC PREDICAMENTS

Thus far this report has focused upon the ways in which the indigenous Neighborhood Networks, the local churches and neighborhood-based social agencies have responded to each discrete housing crisis.

Now we will examine the "response systems" which presently exist in Boston to relieve certain families in immediate need of shelter. Unlike the Neighborhood Networks, which assist all families in need as they appeal for help, the city-wide response systems are geared to specific predicaments. There is a response system for women and children fleeing violence, one for families dishoused because of fire or natural disaster and one for families who have lost their homes because of governmental action. There are no response systems specifically planned to assist families frozen out of their homes, or evicted for any reason, or families with medical problems. Transient and new immigrant families find help from a variety of sources but there is no single system reaching out to embrace all in this category.

In this chapter also we will briefly discuss the role the Department of Public Welfare now plays in the management of housing crisis. The policies of this agency directly affect and limit the abilities of the other response systems to provide housing crisis services.

FAMILIES FLEEING VIOLENCE - A RESPONSE SYSTEM BASED UPON WOMEN'S SHELTERS

During the past decade there has been much written and spoken about the physical abuse of women and children by men. As public concern increased the leaders of women's organizations pointed out that one of the major reasons why women continued to live with abusive men was the lack of secure shelters to which they could flee. Thus the movement toward the establishment of shelters for "battered women" was initiated.

When these shelters first appeared they soon found themselves overwhelmed by the numbers of women who sought shelter and the gravity of the issues brought to view. One of the unexpected developments was that a large number of children accompanied these women when they fled their abusive mates. Indeed the shelter managers soon recognized a consistent pattern ... that a physical assault on a child often had been the "last straw" which led a mother to flee the home.

In Massachusetts a coalition of women's organizations sought public support for the work of these shelters. These efforts culminated in the passage of legislation which designated the Department of Public Welfare as the public agency responsible for families fleeing violence. This support has been administered through contractual arrangements with voluntary agencies operating shelters.

In Chapter 4 we have described the specialized shelters serving women. These include Transition House, Casa Myrna Vasquez, Sancta Maria, the Chardon Street Temporary Home and Rosie's Place. All of these shelters attempt to limit the stay of families but the rehousing problems cited in Chapter 5 make it impossible to enforce such limits. The Director of one house interviewed for this study indicated that much of her own time and that of her staff was spent dealing with "rehousing crisis" rather than "housing crisis".

One of the difficulties faced by shelter staff is the fact that the Boston Housing Authority definition of a family with an emergency need for housing does not include families fleeing abuse. Thus attempts of such a family to obtain a place on an emergency waiting list would be unavailing unless they could qualify under some other provision of the definition.

The staff of these facilities seek to provide a wide variety of services to women and children. In addition to the obvious physical needs of these clients they also face economic uncertainties, legal problems and overwhelming feelings of anger and depression. Counseling, legal services, job development and support groups are some of the specific programs operated by these shelters.

Indeed it may be said that for this group of families a response system has been developed which attempts comprehensiveness. It provides temporary housing and rehousing services as well as help with the trauma of displacement and loss of a home. In this respect, at least, families fleeing violence ... and other women and children taken into these shelters ... are fortunate since they are entering the response system best able to deal with all aspects of family housing crisis.

FAMILIES DISHOUSED BECAUSE OF FIRES OR OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS - THE RESPONSE SYSTEM OF THE GREATER BOSTON RED CROSS DISASTER SERVICE.

The Greater Boston Red Cross provides assistance, including temporary housing, for the victims of fire, flood, windstorm or earthquake. These events are defined by the National Red Cross as "disasters" and these definitions limit the response of all local chapters. Thus, Greater Boston Red Cross cannot respond to other emergencies such as freezeouts, evictions, etc.

The responding person (a volunteer) assesses the on-site situation in regard to the needs of the fire victims. When they cannot return to the building they are transported to and housed in a downtown hotel. Red Cross will pay for temporary housing for only one or two nights. They feel strongly that almost all clients have friends or relatives who can and will house them.

It should be added that the Red Cross defines its basic mission as helping disaster victims get back to normal life. Temporary Housing expenditures total only about 15% of their total outlay for individual-family disaster assistance. They may provide food vouchers, clothing vouchers and funds for some furniture based on individual circumstances. (These other services are not provided to welfare clients who are, however, furnished temporary housing.)

In the City of Boston, the Red Cross is summoned automatically when a three alarm is struck and will be summoned to other (smaller) fires whenever the Fire Department official in charge of "working the fire" at the scene believes fire victims are in need of assistance. In fiscal 1978, in Boston, they were summoned to 287 residential fires which affected 969 families.

The Fiscal 1978 report of the Greater Boston chapter indicates that in the City of Boston 366 families were financially assisted. It is probable that some of these received free lodging for a night or two. This is about thirty percent of the families affected by the fires to which the Red Cross was summoned.

From the point of view of churches and social agencies attempting to rehouse families, there are some major difficulties implicit in this response system. One is that the Red Cross does not appear at small (one and two alarm) fires unless summoned by the firefighter in command on the scene. All parties seem to agree that it would be impossible for the Red Cross to respond to every alarm of fire in the City. But there is a sense that many families "fall through the cracks" of this response system.

More serious is the concern that the basic assumption upon which the entire response system rests ... that "everybody belongs to somebody" and that the Neighborhood Networks will provide shelter for those with no immediate relatives ... is fallacious. It should be added that the assumption is largely true for many neighborhoods such as Charlestown, Brighton, Hyde Park and others. However, in such disparate communities as the North End, Dorchester and South Boston, it can easily be demonstrated that one or two nights shelter provided by the Red Cross is often followed by a frenetic struggle on the part of some church or social agency to find some other kind of temporary housing. In fact this sometimes turns out to be housing in the home of an agency staff member or a church basement.

From the point of view of the Red Cross it must seem that they are widely misunderstood and greatly underappreciated in the Boston community. They are, in fact, delivering a genuine and necessary service which, while it involves the provision of Temporary Housing, emphasizes other types of help to families which have been burned out or have lost their homes through disaster. As we interviewed church and social agency staff for this study we found many who were substantially misinformed about the limitations the National Red Cross places upon the predicaments to which the local chapters may respond. The fact that the entire response system rests upon the efforts of a small number of volunteers is also not widely known.

FAMILIES DISHOUSED BACAUSE OF GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS - THE RESPONSE SYSTEM OF THE BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Federal statutes require local urban redevelopment programs to provide relocation assistance to all individuals and families whose residences are destroyed or damaged during Federally funded construction. Federal funding is available to assist such families relocate themselves. In Boston this program is administered through the Relocation Service of the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

In Boston the Relocation Service has contracts with other City agencies to provide rehousing services for households forced to move because of City actions. The most significant of these contracts is that with the Boston Housing Inspection Department which occasionally "placards" buildings found to be uninhabitable. This tends to happen only after a landlord has been taken to Housing Court and ordered to repair his property. When placarding occurs Relocation Service staff members attempt to provide comprehensive rehousing services to those tenants left in the building. Inevitably these tenants lack significant financial resources and often have major physical or emotional problems which handicap them in their search for new housing.

In addition to seeking housing through the Boston Housing Authority and the private market the Relocation Service staff attempt to provide directly or arrange to have provided those medical or social services the family seems to need at the time of their intervention. When necessary they arrange for temporary housing for families as well. These services continue until the family is permanently rehoused.

TRANSIENT AND NEWCOMING FAMILIES --- A RESPONSE SYSTEM BASED UPON TRAVELERS AID AND MANY OTHER AGENCIES

Most families newly come to Boston, either as immigrants from another nation or transient from another state ordinarily have money for temporary housing or friends who will take them in. These incoming families reach churches and social agencies when relatives or friends cannot house them or when they arrive destitute and without community contacts.

Travelers Aid finds itself confronted with 2 or 3 families a month who are in need of temporary housing. Those who are seeking employment and appear to be employable are placed in the "relocatee" program. The agency will pay for the rental of a room or apartment for the family for a few weeks until the wage earners in the family become employed and first paychecks are received. Travelers Aid will also pay for housing families who will soon move on when the case warrants such expenditure.

New immigrants represent an entirely different type of incoming family. From many agencies and churches in the Hispanic community, from the Chinese American Civic Association and from Jewish Family Services we heard of immigrant families which had to be housed on an emergency basis. An attempt was ordinarily made to supplement temporary housing with economic assistance and social services whenever possible and needed.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

In Chapter 4 it was pointed out that when families were dishoused because of fire, flood or natural disaster the Department of Public Welfare would provide Emergency Assistance funds. Temporary housing in a hotel or motel would be paid for if the Regional Director approved the expenditure.

In Boston the Department of Public Welfare operates the Temporary Home for Women and Children at New Chardon Street. This represented the investment of $238,000 in staff and maintenance costs in fiscal 1978. It is always full (like all of Boston's free shelters) and is considered a major resource by the churches and social agencies of Boston. Although it operates under the administrative direction of the Boston Regional Director it is intended to serve the entire state.

The Temporary Home is not now (and never was intended to be) temporary housing of last resort for all women and children. It will not accept women actively addicted to drugs or alcohol, nor women with suicidal or violent tendencies nor women with serious physical disabilities. Obviously the children of women with any of these problems will receive no shelter either.

Our questionnaire was sent to all the Public Welfare Community Service Offices in the City of Boston. Those who responded invariably indicated that they saw many dishoused and homeless families. The usual pattern of their response to each housing crisis was to refer clients to voluntary agencies and to the Boston Housing Authority for assistance.

Caseworkers became involved in helping specific families obtain new housing and were advocates with Boston Housing Authority staff when documentation of a family's eligibility for housing was required. But it was clear that the Department's caseworkers did not have available any special services or programs which could be of assistance to welfare recipients caught in a housing crisis.

A FINAL OBSERVATION ON THE RESPONSE SYSTEMS

All of these esponse systems have developed as a result of a feeling on the part of one or more agencies that families in one particular type of housing predicament must be relieved. For families whose misfortune it is to be caught in the "wrong kind" of predicament the churches and social agencies represent the only hope of aid beyond the Neighborhood Networks. Evicted families are in a particularly difficult position since even agencies who normally help victims of housing crisis are often reluctant to become involved with eviction cases.

With this chapter we conclude our examination of the existing system for the management of family housing crises in Boston. We shall now summarize our findings and, in Chapter 8, provide some conclusions and comments on the problems described.

CHAPTER 7 - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The concern of this project was to determine the number, location and fate of families burned out, evicted, frozen or forced out of their homes in the city of Boston from September 1, 1978 through February 28, 1979. We have used the term "Housing Crisis" to describe the state in which all these families find themselves. This report describes how these families came to be in this situation and what systems exist to relieve their distress.

HOW MANY FAMILIES REQUEST TEMPORARY HOUSING?

In early March, 1979, a questionnaire was sent to 90 churches, 104 social agencies and 20 hospitals serving all the neighborhoods of the city. It requested a count, as exact as possible, of the numbers of families seeking temporary housing during the period September 1, 1978 to February 28, 1979. We received usable responses from 127 information sources ... fifty-nine percent of the total.

As these responses flowed in two things became clear. First it appeared that there was a good deal of "double counting" of cases because agencies within a neighborhood tended to refer families to one another. Secondly, there was often one agency which could be identified as the "lead agency" to which other agencies referred families in housing crisis. For each neighborhood we developed an "estimated unduplicated demand" by assuming that the largest number of cases reported by a single church or social agency included the bulk of those reported by other respondents.

Using this method we have concluded that at least 616 families sought help during the six-month period designated by our study. It should be noted that this is not a "census" of families who found themselves in some sort of housing crisis. It only represents that portion of the total who could not solve their housing crisis by their own efforts.

HOW IS THIS TEMPORARY HOUSING BEING PROVIDED?

There was heartening evidence from all parts of Boston that the simple human tradition of helping neighbors in trouble still remains strong. However, our interviews with pastors and social agency staff taught us that these indigenous response systems (which we have called "Neighborhood Networks") do not simply maintain themselves. In neighborhood after neighborhood we heard that neighbors, friends and relatives who served as "host" families had to be supported while playing this role. Church and agency staff provided food, financial assistance and personal support to both "host" and "guest" families while new housing was being sought.

Some families are not sheltered by anyone. For these families there are few free shelters. Most of those which exist are programmed to serve women and girls but not men or adolescent boys. If families are not willing to split up they must be placed in low cost rented rooms. We surveyed these facilities and included a listing of them in the report.

HOW DO THESE FAMILIES FIND PERMANENT HOUSING?

When this report was planned it was assumed that churches and social agencies defined the placement of families in temporary housing as their primary task. However, we soon became convinced that almost all providers felt an obligation to help a family which had been temporarily housed obtain permanent housing as well.

To oversimplify our account of the rehousing process somewhat it may be said that a low income family will often apply for a Boston Housing Authority apartment on an emergency basis but will usually explore the feasibility of renting in the private market at the same time.

The Boston Housing Authority will consider for emergency status only families dishoused for the following reasons:

1. A disaster (i.e., fire, windstorm or flood).

2. The property uninhabitable because of hazardous conditions which have resulted in the condemnation of the property by Boston's Housing Inspectors.

3. A court-ordered eviction for causes other than non-payment of rent.

If a family can prove that its need for permanent housing stems from one of these predicaments, can meet income requirements and is not disqualified for some other reason, it will then be placed on an "emergency status waiting list". Large families find that even after having been granted emergency status they may have to wait three or more months before being offered an apartment.

Attempting to find a reasonably-priced private-market apartment in many of the neighborhoods of Boston is also a difficult and frustrating task. Neighborhood workers, clergymen, health care professionals and social workers throughout Boston have become part-time apartment hunters in their efforts to help families find permanent housing. Despite the difficulties some respondents reported that apartments could be found. Friendly personal contact with real estate dealers and landlords coupled with persistence in the face of frustration appear to be the two essentials for success.

THE DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS OF DOUBLING UP

While families are seeking new permanent housing they are usually living temporarily with neighbors, friends or relatives. Unfortunately these arrangements sometimes break down. Personal strains and frictions multiply over time. Quarrels between children escalate to involve entire families. These destructive events are most likely to occur when a family has been staying for some time with another without making substantial progress toward finding an apartment of its own or making other living arrangements.

EXISTING RESPONSE SYSTEMS

In Boston there are some specific response systems which have been established to relieve families who have become dishoused or homeless. The best developed of these are the shelters for women and children who fled their homes because of fear of male violence. Not only shelter but also emotional support, employment services and legal assistance are provided in these facilities. Families burned out or dishoused by natural disaster may get help from the Greater Boston Chapter of Red Cross and/or the Department of Public Welfare. The Relocation Service of the Boston Redevelopment Authority accepts responsibility for families who have been dishoused by governmental action. Some families newly come to Boston from other states or foreign countries find help from Travelers Aid or a neighborhood agency.

CHAPTER 8 - COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The various predicaments which result in homelessness and dishousing are not actually commonplace in an urban environment but they are certainly common enough. Fires, evictions, freezeouts and family violence are all part of the urban scene. Each city copes with these manifestations of urban life in a slightly different way. Here in Boston a formal response system exists which provides help to families burned out, dishoused by government action or fleeing violence. For other families an informal system of friends, neighbors and host families recruited by churches and social agencies provides whatever help it can. We have been impressed by the gallantry and dedication of the women and men who are working in the neighborhoods of Boston to meet these day to day housing crises. For the most part they are functioning without adequate resources, without social recognition of the importance of their task and without any medium through which they can communicate with one another.

In the course of preparing this report we have received many suggestions regarding ways in which the existing formal and informal response systems might be improved. While the specific suggestions were quite different from one another our sources tended to agree on the goals to be achieved. These we will now summarize in the most general terms and then comment upon in detail.

First -- There was agreement that some way should be found to provide more free shelter beds for entire families. It is true that many such families now are sheltered through the Neighborhood Networks. However, these Networks are under great strain in several sections of the City and in some areas have broken down.

Second -- There was agreement that whenever possible temporary housing should be provided in the neighborhoods and should be administered by organizations or institutions geographically located in the neighborhoods. The need for this is most dramatically seen when emergencies arise at night or on weekends when public (and many private) agencies are closed. The ability of these neighborhood-based agencies to quickly respond to housing crisis should be improved, but they should not be replaced by a centralized system.

Third -- There was agreement among most agencies actually providing temporary housing to families that they felt responsible for helping these families to locate permanent housing. Therefore, there was a need to increase the effectiveness of the agencies attempting to cope with this difficult task.

Fourth -- There was agreement that the families who came to churches and social agencies for help were, as a group, in need of many other services as well. The process through which each family had become dishoused or homeless was usually a dramatic and traumatizing one requiring various forms of emotional support and practical counseling. A need for emergency financial assistance is an almost inevitable concomitant of dishousing. A need for other specific types of help are characteristic of certain kinds of housing crises. For example, families fleeing violence very often need emergency health care and legal assistance.

THE NEED FOR MORE FREE SHELTER BEDS

When the term "family shelter" is used there is no single agreed upon model of such a shelter which all may refer to. A family shelter may be a large congregate facility such as the schools and meeting halls which were used during the 1978 blizzard. It may be a smaller facility in which each family has a private room or rooms but in which meals are prepared and eaten in a common kitchen and toilet facilities are shared. A hotel or motel may be used as a family shelter with meals supplied at set times or obtained by the family in outside restaurants. Or a family may actually be provided with an apartment where it may have privacy, cook its meals and function much as it would if it were in permanent housing.

At the present time only the Salvation Army is providing free shelter to families which include men, women and children. They are using for this purpose an entire apartment building. While there was general agreement among our respondents that additional shelter beds were needed which would allow more families to be housed together there was no agreement on whether this model or some other should be employed nor was there agreement on the most desirable plan for achieving the goal. The following suggestions have been made as methods which might be followed.

Use of vacant Boston Housing Authority apartments - It is well known that many Boston Housing Authority apartments are vacant because of their need of repair. It has been proposed that one or more buildings could be turned over to a consortium of churches and social agencies by the BHA in imitation of a temporary housing program now operating in New York City. Others have suggested that it would be preferable to reserve for temporary housing a certain number of apartments geographically scattered throughout the City. This plan would be a resumption by the BHA of a program they operated until a few years ago.

It should be noted that there are serious objections to the use of these vacant apartments for temporary housing. Many persons close to housing issues in Boston feel that the Boston Housing Authority should concentrate on providing permanent housing for families. Furthermore it is not at all clear what "ground rules" would be established for the use of these vacant apartments. Issues of accessibility and length of stay would have to be thought through before any such program could be launched.

However, the most significant barrier to implementation of this idea lies in the uncertain legal situation confronting the Boston Housing Authority. A court order placing the Authority into receivership is currently being appealed. If the appeal fails and the order takes effect it will be several months before new programmatic initiatives will be administratively possible.

Use of other types of vacant buildings for shelter purposes - There are throughout Boston a number of partially or entirely empty buildings which might be used for some type of shelter program. Some of these, such as disused convents or schools, are still in good repair and with remodeling could be made suitable for use as a type of shelter in which meals are prepared and eaten in common. It has been suggested that neighborhood groups might cooperate in the development of a program for the use of such buildings while renting the space from the present owners.

Development of a pool of funds for purchase of low-cost shelter - Both the use of Boston Housing Authority facilities and the use of other potentially habitable buildings would require the creation of a new program through which a shelter would be administered. Some have suggested that it would be more efficient to pool funds from social agencies, churches and other private sources which could simply be used to rent rooms in hotels or motels as needed. This would be an expansion of the present practice of some social agencies which use the Hotels Essex and Avery as well as the Charlestown YMCA to provide short term shelter for families. Social Action Ministries of Greater Boston has established a small fund of this type which is administered by the staff of the Project Place Hotline.

Expansion of the Department of Public Welfare programs of emergency shelter - The free shelter for women and children directly operated by the Dpeartment on New Chardon Street is a major resource for dishoused and homeless families. The Department also supports some other free shelters for women and children through purchase of service contracts. Title XX funds administered by the Department represent a significant source of support for the shelters for women and children fleeing violence.

Some respondents have recommended that the Department expand its purchase of service policy to include shelters for families which include adult males. The Department occasionally rents emergency quarters for such families in hotels and motels. This practice could be substantially increased.

None of these suggested programmatic initiatives are perfect. All would require the cooperation of a number of agencies and some would require voluntary agencies to expend funds for the start-up costs of the proposed programs. However, there is a growing realization among private agencies that substantial funds are now being expended in the form of staff time because beds cannot be found quickly for these families. This fact will motivate agencies to look closely at the benefits which might be derived from cooperating in one or more efforts to increase the number of beds available.

THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE NEIGHBORHOOD RESPONSE SYSTEMS

In many different ways the respondents to our questionnaire emphasized the importance of neighborhood-based efforts to provide temporary housing for families. The Neighborhood Networks are effective, in part, because they allow families to stay in the geographic areas with which they are familiar and where their children have their friends.

There was general agreement among our respondents that the churches and social agencies closest to the problem should be chiefly responsible for developing programs to help the dishoused and homeless families. Two specific suggestions were made which related to this goal.

Assisting Host Families -- Several respondents pointed out that when one family moved in with another the host family suffered economically. It was suggested that ways might be found, either through private or public sources, to pay stipends to host families who regularly accepted families into their homes. Such a program would be modeled upon that now used by private agencies for the provision of emergency foster care for children. Such a program, if planned and and administered through a local church or agency, could increase the number of families willing to volunteer their homes in emergencies.

Development of Information and Referral training for church and agency staff -- Local workers have a great deal of detailed knowledge regarding local conditions. However, these workers professed themselves to be puzzled and confused by the policies of such major "downtown" agencies as the Department of Public Welfare, the Boston Housing Authority and some of the major private agencies. Also they lacked information regarding specialized resources such as the Lend-A-Hand Society.

It was suggested that much could be done to improve the amount and quality of information available to these workers. Accurate information on policies, resources and programs would be most welcome if it could be provided in an easy to use and timely fashion. The preparation by the Social Action Ministries of Greater Boston of an Emergency Resources Directory in the Spring of 1979 was clearly a step in the right direction. Similar publications or educational programs would clearly be a contribution to the ability of the neighborhoods to respond to housing crises.

THE NEED FOR HELP IN FINDING PERMANENT HOUSING FOR FAMILIES

Our respondents agreed that the most difficult and time-consuming part of their task lay in helping them to permanently relocate. The process of gentrification in certain low-income neighborhoods and the growing popularity of condominium ownership have reduced the number of low cost apartments in Boston. Fires have also depleted the housing stock. Since most of the families coming to churches and social agencies for help are poor they cannot afford the rents being asked. Those families receiving Welfare benefits are handicapped by the unrealistically low amounts allotted for rental in standard Welfare budgets. Those ineligible for Welfare benefits are often in even a poorer position since their income is often based on low paying transitory jobs.

It is clearly true that the long-range solution to this problem requires the concerned human services community to strongly advocate for additional low-cost housing for poor families. But it also is true that the church and social agency staff members who responded to our questionnaire are confronted with an immediate and distressing reality ... men, women and children living in some type of temporary housing arrangement who are looking without success for a new place to live. In order to better respond to these immediate demands for service several suggestions have been made.

Increase the availability of Boston Housing Authority apartments -- If there was a single issue upon which all our respondents agreed it was that the Boston Housing Authority should be urgently concerned with the plight of dishoused and homeless families and that the rehousing of these families should be made a matter of first priority. Vacant apartments in family housing projects have already been mentioned as a potential resource for temporary housing of families. However, these vacant apartments are even more clearly a major resource for the permanent rehousing of these same families.

In fact the Boston Housing Authority, through its emergency housing procedure, does respond to the needs of many dishoused families. However, the process is so hedged about by regulations ... many of them imposed by Federal administrators ... that it is viewed as problematical by church and social agency staff. Furthermore, the lack of 3- 4- and 5- bedroom apartments forces larger families to wait for months even after they have been placed on the emergency status list.

We have already noted that the matter of receivership for the Authority remains unresolved. If a receiver should eventually be appointed the ability of the Authority to respond to family housing crises should be high on his/her agenda.

Develop a fund to facilitate occupancy of new housing - Several of our respondents indicated that they were frustrated by their inability to provide funds for the incidental expenses of obtaining an apartment. In some instances money was required for moving expenses ... usually in cash. In other cases money was urgently needed to allow the family to pay a month's rent in advance, to pay the costs of installing a new lock on the door or to make some similar investment.

It was suggested by some that churches and social agencies might cooperate in establishing a pool of funds for the purpose of facilitating housing occupancy. If administered by a social agency experienced in the disbursement of small amounts for emergency purposes this could prove a useful resource for the churches and those smaller agencies whose staff is less familiar with existing emergency financial resources and with appropriate bookkeeping procedures.

Develop an Apartment Locator Service - Since so many agencies are now involved in seeking apartments for families it has been suggested that some sort of cooperative apartment searching program might be practical. This might take the form of an informal sharing of information or a formalized program similar to that now being carried on by the Women's Educational and Industrial Union for elderly persons.

THE NEED TO PROVIDE OTHER SERVICES FOR DISHOUSED AND HOMELESS FAMILIES

This entire report has dealt, at some length, with the simple human need of shelter. It has discussed the demand for supply of and availability of temporary housing in Boston.

However, we would be remiss if we did not mention the fact that the families who come seeking help have many other needs as well. Many of these have already been referred to in the body of this report. Legal problems as a result of evictions or a need for medical treatment as a result of spouse abuse are among these. Most common of all is the need for financial assistance and often for food as well.

Many staff members of agencies who provide help in finding temporary housing also have reminded us that counseling is very much part of the service which must be delivered. Burned-out families or those who have lost homes through some other form of physical destruction are especially in need of compassionate support during this crisis in their lives.

Therefore, it has been suggested to us that the programs which may be developed to improve Boston's ability to deal with family housing crises should be related to other ongoing human service programs. In a great many cases the family's need is not simply a need for temporary housing or relocation services. On the contrary, it should be seen as a need for help in coping with a major catastrophic change caused by (and symbolized as) the loss of a domicile but having emotional and practical consequences which reverberate through all aspects of the family's life together.

The need for a place to live ... to place one's bed, cook one's food, shelter one's children and store one's possessions ... is so elemental a need that to be deprived of it is one of the classic examples of human privation. When a natural disaster sweeps away many houses at the same time the social, medical and humanitarian services of that community are mobilized to help the victims. In this report we have discussed families whose lives are uprooted and changed by individual and idiosyncratic events which do not have the dramatic potential of a tornado, flood or blizzard. Neither do these isolated events bring together all the community's resources in an attempt to help each affected family in turn. This task is left to the churches and neighborhood-based agencies who "take care of their own" as best they can. It is our hope that this report will be helpful to those who wish to strengthen the capacity of those neighborhood response mechanisms while at the same time focusing the attention of the larger community on the consequences of these "everyday disasters" which are part of urban life.

APPENDIX A

A DETAILED PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM RESPONDENTS TO OUR QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTE: The information obtained in this Appendix was obtained through mailed returns of our questionnaire or during follow-up telephone interviews. Specific predicaments are listed only when agencies or churches reported they were the reasons for family housing crises. Agencies and churches were assigned to specific neighborhoods on the basis of the best information available regarding their service area.

BACK BAY AND THE FENWAY

Arlington Street Church
12 cases - primarily individuals some families.
Transients, Evictions, Fleeing violence

Fenway Community Health Center
1 or 2 families
Medical Problems

Parent's and Children's Services-Fenway
1 family
Fleeing violence

First and Second Church
Have seen cases - no figures
Evictions

Saint Anne Church-Back Bay
No requests

St. Cecilia's Church-Back Bay
No requests

First Lutheran Church-Back Bay
No requests

Xavier Oratory-Back Bay
No requests

BEACON HILL/GOVERNMENT CENTER/DOWNTOWN BOSTON

Freedom Trail Clinic
1-3 a week, primarily individuals some families, mental illness, Evictions, Transients

St. Anthony Shrine
No requests

St. Joseph's Church-West End
3-4 families, plus many individuals
Battered Women

St. James Church
No requests.

BRIGHTON/ALLSTON

Allston-Brighton Little City Hall
25 families
Burnouts and freezeouts
Evictions

St. Columbkille Church-Brighton
1 family
Freezeout

St. Gabriel Church-Brighton
No requests

St. Anthony's Church
No Requests

Brighton-Allston Mental Health Clinic
2 families
1-uninhabitable building
1-mental illness

Allston-Brighton Neighborhood Health Center
No requests

Our Lady of the Presentation Church Brighton
No requests

Our Lady of Fatima Shrine-Brighton
No requests.

CHARLESTOWN

John F. Kennedy Family Service Center
3 families
1-Burnout, 1-Eviction, 1-Transient

St. Mary's Church
No requests

St. Catherine of Siena Church
No requests

Bunker Hill Health Center
1 family and several individuals
Fleeing violence

Charlestown Little City Hall
No requests

CHINATOWN

Chinese American Civic Association
13 (Feb. and Mar.)
6 Evictions, 5 New immigrant families, 2 Burnouts

Maryknoll Sisters
3 Families
2 Burnouts, 1 "family problem"

Chinatown Little City Hall
4-5 Families (25 people)
All Burnouts

South Cove Community Health Center
3-4 Families
Mainly New immigrant families

DORCHESTER-NORTH

Denison House - Uphams Corner
50 families
30 Burnouts, 10 Freezeouts
8 Evictions, 2 fleeing violence

Upham's Corner Little City Hall
10 families
Burnouts and freezeouts

Columbia Point Welfare Office
7 families
Mainly teenage mothers forced out

West Howell St., Welfare Office
See cases but no figures

St. Margaret's Church
No requests.

St. Paul's Church
20 families
Burnouts, Fleeing violence, Transients, freezeouts

St. Kevin's Church-Uphams Corner
10 families
Mainly burnouts

Pilgrim Congregational Church (Uphams Corner)
5 families
Burnouts, fleeing violence

Columbia Point Community Youth Center
No requests

DORCHESTER-SOUTH

Dorchester House-Fields Corner
50 families
Burnouts, evictions, fleeing violence, teenage forceouts

Franklin Field Little City Hall
10 families
Mainly burnouts

Charles Drew Family Life Center-Grove Hall
9 families
Newcomers, burnouts

St. John's & St. Hugh's Church-Grove Hall
5 families
Mainly Evictions

St. Ambrose Church-Fields Corner
See cases but no figures

St. Angela's Church-Mattapan
No requests

St. Gregory's Church-Lower Mills
No requests

Dorchester Little City Hall-Fields Corner
20 families
Burnouts, freezeouts, evictions

Grove Hall Public Welfare Office
10 families and individuals
All types

Neponset Health Center
7 families
3 fleeing violence, 2 Burnouts, 2 Evictions

St. Leo's Church
3 families
Burnouts

St. Williams Church-Savin Hill
2 families
Evictions

St. Peter's Church-Fields Corner
No requests

St. Matthew's Church-Mattapan
No requests

EAST BOSTON

East Boston Public Welfare Office
85 families and individuals
35 Burnouts,
15 Condemned housing,
12 Evictions, 10 Transients
9 Freezeouts,
2 Fleeing violence,
2 Mental Illness

East Boston Little City Hall
No requests

St. Mary Star of the Sea
No requests

Our Lady of Assumption
No requests

JAMAICA PLAIN

Martha Eliot Health Center
40 families
All types

Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center
4 families and individuals
Alcoholism, evictions

St. Andrew's Church
1 family
Fleeing violence

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood House
No requests

Jamaica Plain Little City Hall
25 families
Burnouts, freezeouts

Blessed Sacrament Church
2-5 families
Burnouts

ESAC
1 family
Burnout

St. Thomas Aquinas Church
No requests.

NORTH END

North End Union
24 families, 2 individuals
24 Burnouts, 2 Mentally Ill

North End Little City Hall
No requests

Old North Church
No requests.

St. Leonard's Church
8 families
4 Transients, 2 Burnouts
2 Mentally Ill

St. Stephen's Church
No requests

ROXBURY-LOWER

Alianza Hispana - Dudley Square
29 Families
10 freezeouts, 6 Evictions,
4 families from other states
2 Mental Illness
2 Fleeing violence

Roxbury Action Program-Highland Park
6-12 - see 1 or 2 a month
All types

St. Patrick's Church-Dudley Square
4 families
Evictions, fleeing violence

Cape Verdean House-Dudley Square
See many cases but no figures

Greater Roxbury Development Corp. Dudley Square
No requests

Roxbury-North Dorchester APAC
16 families at least
9 Burnouts, 3 Mental illness,
2 Evictions, 2 Transients

Cooper Community
8 families
Burnouts, evictions,
Roof leaks, crime in area

St. Phillip's Church-Warwick House
4 families
Evictions, fleeing violence,
freezeouts

St. Francis De Sales Church
2 families
1 Burnout, 1 Eviction

Little Sisters of the Poor Family Health Service-Dudley Square
No requests.

ROXBURY-UPPER

St. Mary of the Angels Church-Egleston Square
20 families and many individuals
Burnouts, new families, Mental Illness, Medical Problems

Mission Chuch Spanish Apostolate
5 families
All types

Roxbury Multi Service Center
See many cases but no figures.

St. Joseph's Church
6 families
3 Evictions, 1 Transient,
1 Mentally Ill,
1 Burnout

Dimock Community Health Center
2 or 3 families
Mainly evictions

SOUTH END

South End (Church St.) Office, Dept. of Public Welfare
75-100 families and individuals
All types

South End Community Health Center
At least 12
Mainly burnouts, frozen pipes

Women's Service Club
3 families
2 burnouts, 1 freezeout

Holy Trinity Church
No requests.

United South End Settlements
40 families
All types but especially evictions

Immaculate Conception Church
14 families and individuals
5 Burnouts, 4 Mentally Ill
3 Freezeouts, 2 Transients

Ellis Memorial Center
3 families and many individuals
1 Burnout, 1 Freezeout,
1 immigrant family

SOUTH BOSTON

South Boston Action
At least 30 families
Primarily burnouts

South Boston Little City Hall
8-10 families
Burnouts and no utilities

South Boston Neighborhood House
5 families
3 mentally ill, 1 eviction
1 fleeing violence

St. Augustine
No requests

St. Peter & Paul plus St. Vincent
together reported 30 families
15 incoming & transients, 7 mental
Illness, 5 Evictions, 3 burnouts

South Boston Community Mental Health Center
Many requests but no figures
Burnouts and domestic violence

Our Lady of Czestachowa
No requests

St. Monica
No requests

SOUTHWEST BOSTON (Hyde Park, Roslindale, West Roxbury)

The Family Connection (Roslindale)
25 families and individuals
7 "general housing"
6 Mental Illness, 5 Transients
4 Evictions, 3 Fleeing violence

Hyde Park Little City Hall
3 families
Burnout, eviction,
mental illness

St. Joseph's Church (Hyde Park)
No requests

Stratford St. United Methodist (West Roxbury)
No requests

Roslindale Public Welfare Office
(covers all Southwest Boston)
At least 15
Many fleeing violence and
young mothers forced out.

St. George Orthodox Church (Roxbury)
1 family
New family in area

Most Precious Blood Church (Hyde Park)
No requests

St. Anne's Church (Roslindale)
No requests

West Roxbury Little City Hall
No requests.

MATERNITY HOMES

St. Mary's Maternity Home
52
Young mothers with newly delivered children who have nowhere to go

Crittenton Hastings House
45
Young mothers with newly delivered children who have nowhere to go

HOSPITALS-GENERAL AND SPECIALIZED

Boston City Hospital
40 families
Burnouts, freezeouts, transients evictions, battered women

Children's Hospital
20 families
Fleeing violence, Evictions freezeouts, Transients, mental illness

Carney Hospital
18 families
All types

Peter Bent Brigham
6 families
4 Fleeing violence, 1 Eviction, 1 Burnout

Massachusetts General
1 family
Medical problem

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Hospital
No requests

St. Margaret's Hospital
No requests

Faulkner Hospital
No requests

New England Deaconness
No requests

Massachusetts Mental Health Center
Approx. 25 primarily individuals
Mental illness, Transients evictions

Boston Hospital for Women
20 families
Young mothers would could not return to their parents, also burnouts, evictions and families fleeing violence

Glenside Hospital
10-primarily individuals some families
Burnouts, medical problems, young mothers forced out of house

Lemeul Shattuck Hospital
1 family
Fleeing violence

New England Baptist Hospital
1 family
Family turmoil

Washingtonian Hospital
No requests

Beth Israel Hospital
No requests

Hahnemann Hospital
No requests

AGENCIES WHICH PROVIDE CITY-WIDE SERVICES

Boston Children's Service Association
9 families in one month
Primarily new mothers forced from homes

Samaritans
Have telephone requests but no figures.

Jewish Family Services
5 families
Immigrants from Russia

APPENDIX B

A LIST OF FREE SHELTERS, LOW COST RENTAL POSSIBILITIES AND SPECIALIZED TEMPORARY HOUSING RESOURCES

NOTE: The information in this listing was compiled in October, 1979. Prices and shelter policies will change over time. The reader is urged to telephone or write the resources listed here for further information.

SHELTERS

1. SHELTERS WHICH ACCEPT ALL PERSONS, BOTH ADULT AND CHILD

(1) Roxbury Corps Center
Salvation Army
23 Vernon Street
Roxbury, MA. 02119
427-6700

Hours: This number may be called until about 10:00 p.m.
-A few apartments are available for $7.00 a night to families in crisis. Payment may be made by the agency referring the family or by the family itself. Very often these apartments are full so agencies or churches must call. Staff will screen applicant families before they are accepted for residence.

(2) Project Place
32 Rutland Street
Boston, MA. 02118
262-3740

Hours: The office is open all night.
-Overnight crashing available for a few people who cannot find anywhere else to stay. Must leave in the morning. Persons must be accepted by the overnight staff.

II. SHELTERS WHICH WILL ACCEPT ALL ADULTS BUT NOT CHILDREN

(3) Shelter
Box 516
Cambridge, MA. 02139
547-1885

Hours: Mon-Fri. 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.
Sat-Sun. 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.
-Provides overnight emergency free shelter for homeless men and women over 18 years old. Persons must be referred through some outside referral agency. Mainly used by Cambridge and Somerville agencies. Beds reserved for use by Cambridge Agencies until 7:00 each night.

(4) Salvation Army Harborlight Center
407 Shawmut Avenue
Boston, MA. 02118
536-7469

Hours: 24 hours a day - Seven days a week
-A free shelter open to men and women 18 years of age and older. They must be sober and in need of shelter. Also provided are food, clothing and crisis intervention counseling. Admission is by referral through an agency or self application. Shelter is available on a space-available basis.

(5) Pine Street Inn
60 Bristol Street
Boston, MA. 02118
482-4944

Hours: MEN: Doors are open from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
4:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
WOMEN: May enter the shelter at any time.
-A free shelter for men and women over 17 years of age. Operates on a first-come first-serve basis. Lunch is served about noon. Supper served in the evening. Doors close at 10:00 p.m.

III. SHELTERS WHICH WILL ACCEPT ADULT WOMEN ONLY

(6) Rosie's Place
1662 Washington Street
Boston, MA. 02118
536-4652

Hours: Sunday-Friday 5:00 p.m.-8:30 a.m. Closed Saturday.
-A free shelter for women. A meal is offered each night. Whenever possible snacks and coffee are available. Clothing is often available. Shelter is offered for six nights, then the person has to find some other type of housing. After a period of two weeks has gone by, a person may return to Rosie's for another six nights.

(7) Sancta Maria
11 Waltham Street
Boston, MA. 02118
423-4366

Hours: Open seven days a week - Arrival time 7 to 11 p.m.
but beds will not be held after 9:00 p.m.
-Offers free shelter to women in a crisis situation 17 or over. There are no fee or geographic restrictions. Offers a homelike atmosphere. There is an evening snack, breakfast. No supervision after 11:00 p.m. Not for disruptive women. Women must telephone first to assure reservation of a bed. Women may stay only three nights.

IV. SHELTERS WHICH WILL ACCEPT WOMEN ACCOMPANIED BY CHILDREN

(8) Transition House
P.O. Box 530
Harvard Square Station
Cambridge, MA. 02139
Hotline: 661-7203 Office 354-2676

Hours: Hotline - 24 hours a day
-Shelter which only accepts women who have been beaten and their children. No boys over 12 are admitted. Women without children may stay four weeks, women with children may stay six weeks. Residents must pay some housekeeping costs.

Women are interviewed by staff before being accepted for residence. Referrals from social agencies and police are accepted. Women may also call the hotline and seek admittance directly.

(9) Casa Myrna Vasquez
Location not revealed
266-4305 (office - 262-9581 shelter)

Hours: Open 24 hours a day.
-Free shelter for women and children - primarily Hispanic. Located in the South End. Will not accept transients nor those addicted to drugs or alcohol. Not for actively psychotic women. Those seeking shelter must telephone and must be screened before being admitted.

(10) Temporary Home for Women and Children
41 New Chardon Street
Boston, MA. 02114
523-2337

Hours: Open 24 hours a day - Seven days a week
-This agency offers temporary free shelter to women and their children. It does not accept boys over 12 years of age. Meals are supplied. Admissions are usually through a referral by a Public Welfare office or a social agency. However, self-referrals are accepted. Transient and other single women are accepted although the services are geared to families in crisis.

(11) Respond
No address given
623-5900

Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Monday through Friday.
-A free shelter for battered women. Primary purpose is to help women from Somerville but will accept persons from other communities. Persons calling the above number will be screened over the telephone and then will travel to the office where they will be further screened.

No active drug or alcohol abusers accepted. Persons seeking entry must call Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Shelter's program includes support groups and legal advice.

(12) Elizabeth Stone House
108 Brookside Avenue
Jamaica Plain, MA. 02130
522-3417

Hours: See below
-Inexpensive shelter for women over 18 in situations of emotional distress. Will accept women with children. This is an organized program for women willing to make a commitment to changing their lives. No persons actively addicted to alcohol or drugs accepted. Women must call for an appointment and be interviewed by staff, then must meet with incumbent residents before being accepted. Once accepted they must pay for their room, buy their own food and follow the rules of the House.

V. SHELTERS WHICH ACCEPT ONLY ADOLESCENTS (UNDER 18)

(13) Newton-Wellesley-Weston Multi-Service Center
1301 Center Street
Newton Center, MA. 02159
244-4802

Hours: 24 hours - Seven days a week
-This is a shelter which will accept adolescents aged 13-20 provided that they are residents of Newton, Needham, Wellesley or Weston. All must be screened by a counselor before being accepted as residents. Limited to 30 days of residence.

(14) Place Runaway House
204 Marlborough Street
Boston, MA. 02115
536-4181

Hours: 24 hours - Seven days
-This is a short term free crisis intervention shelter for youth aged 13 to 17 - both male and female. It is primarily for runaways. State law requires that the staff contact parents within 72 hours after a youth has accepted shelter. There are free meals and counseling services. Will not accept violent people, heavy drug users or prostitutes, persons entering must be sober. This is not a crash pad. Youths may call first or just knock on the door.

(15) Bridge (Bridge Over Troubled Waters)
23 Beacon Street
Boston, Mass. 02108
227-7114

Hours: Not relevant. See Below
-This agency specializes in working with street people and runaways in Boston and Cambridge. It has available a very limited number of volunteer foster homes where young people may stay temporarily. Access to these homes is gained through streetworkers and counselors at Bridge. Persons calling the office will be asked to come in for an interview. However, most placements in these foster homes are made through on-the-street contacts between staff and young people.

(16) 735 Inc.
81 Rowe Street
Melrose, Mass. 02176
662-8976 (office) 438-0477 (shelter)

Temporary shelter for adolescents aged 12-17. Will accept referrals from agencies but will also take walk-ins. Parents are <u>always</u> contacted immediately when young people stay in the shelter.

Serves Melrose, Wakefield, Stoneham, Reading, North Reading.

INEXPENSIVE ROOMS FOR RENT

I. FACILITIES WHICH RENT TO ALL PERSONS, BOTH ADULT AND CHILD

(17) Charlestown Armed Services YMCA
32 City Square
Charlestown, MA. 02129
242-2660

Hours: Open 24 hours a day every day.
-Basically, a YMCA for military personnel and families. If room is available the rates (Oct. 1979) are $9.00 a day per person, $11.00 per day for a married couple. Weekly rates available upon inquiry. The charges do not include food. The agency accepts clients of social agencies who guarantee to pay for rooms and charge the referring agency for three meals consumed in the restaurant in the building. It is advisable to call to reserve a room since facility is crowded when ships are in port.

(18) Hotel Essex
695 Atlantic Avenue
Boston, MA. 02111
482-9000

Hours: Open 24 hours a day
-Rooms for guests. Rates (Oct. 1979) $27.00 a day for one person, $34.00 for a couple, $38.00 for a family of four. Other prices quoted upon inquiry.

(19) Hotel Bradford
275 Tremont Street
Boston, MA. 02116
426-1400

Hours: Open 24 hours per day
-Rooms for guests. Rates (Oct. 1979) $38.00 a day plus tax for a single. $44.00 a day plus tax for a double. Will accept families.

(20) Hotel Avery
24 Avery Street
Boston, MA. 02111
482-8000

Hours: Open 24 hours per day
-Rooms for guests. Prices (Oct. 1979) $23.00 for a single room, $28.00 for a double. Children under 12 may stay free of charge.

II. FACILITIES WHICH WILL RENT TO ADULTS BUT NOT TO CHILDREN

(21) Beacon Plaza
1459 Beacon Street
Brookline, MA. 02146
232-6550

Rooms for guests. Rental for one night is $15.85. There are no weekly rates. Children not accepted.

III. FACILITIES WHICH WILL RENT TO ADULT MEN ONLY

(22) Beacon Chambers
19 Myrtle Street
Boston, MA. 02114
523-5212

Hours: Open 24 hours a day
-Low cost rooms for men. Rates (Oct. 1979) $6.25 - $8.80 a night. No weekly rates available. Rooms must always be paid for in advance. This facility is always filled by 6:00 p.m. so persons seeking a room must come and pay sometime during the afternoon. A $2.00 key deposit is charged.

(23) Cambridge YMCA
820 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA. 02139
876-3860

Hours: Always open
-Rooms available for men. Rates (Oct. 1979) $10.00 a night. Weekly rates usually available depending on how full residence is. Rooms must be paid for in advance. $5.00 key deposit required.

(24) Huntington Avenue YMCA
316 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA. 02116
536-7800

Hours: Always open
-Rooms available for men over 18. Rates (Oct. 1979) $11.00 a night. No weekly rates available. Rooms must be paid for in advance.

IV. FACILITIES WHICH WILL RENT TO ADULT WOMEN ONLY

(25) St. Helena's House
89 Union Park Street
Boston, MA. 02118
482-0833

-An inexpensive boarding house for working and retired women. Rooms are private, baths are shared. Rates (Oct. 1979) $55.00 a week including three meals a day every day.

(26) Cambridge YWCA
7 Temple Street
Cambridge, MA. 02138
491-6050

Hours: Always open, however, usually full. Rooms must be reserved in advance.
-Rooms available for women. Rates (Oct. 1979) $10.00 - $14.00 a night for transients. Some double rooms available for $17.50. Persons residing for more than a month may get special rates with two meals but only after an application process is gone through. Rooms must be paid for in advance. Children not accepted.

(27) Boston YWCA (Berkeley Residence Club)
40 Berkeley Street
Boston, MA. 02116
482-8850

Hours: Always open
-Rooms for women. Rates (Oct. 1979) $15.00 a night including breakfast. Weekly rates for an individual is $65.00 with no meals. A few double rooms are available at $29.00 a night for each guest with breakfast. Persons residing for more than a month may get special rates if they join the YWCA and go through an application process. These rates include breakfast and dinner. Rooms must be paid for in advance. A transient checking in must have an ID and luggage. No children accepted.

(28) Bethany Union
256 Newbury Street
Boston, MA. 02116
266-0240

Hours: 9:00 - 4:00 p.m. - Mon-Fri.
(Office open for receiving applications)
-Single and double rooms available for women aged 18 to 30. The facility is intended to serve persons with low income - primarily students. All seeking to stay there must go through an application process which includes a demonstration of financial need. Rates (Oct. 1979) at $29.00 a week for a single and $27.00 for a double. Residents are asked to stay at least four weeks. Rates include breakfast and dinner on weekdays. Women with children not accepted.

(29) Our Lady's Guild House
20 Charlesgate West
Boston, MA. 02115
536-3000

-A residence for students, working and retired women. Persons staying less than a week usually pay $15.00 a night. Those staying a week or more usually pay $27.00 - $35.00 a week. Breakfast is available. All persons must be interviewed by the Administrator before being admitted.

V. FACILITIES WHICH RENT ONLY TO FAMILIES OF PATIENTS IN LOCAL HOSPITALS

(30) Beacon Hill Friends House
6 Chestnut Street
Boston, MA. 02108
227-9118

Hours: Reservations only. See below
-This facility provides low cost rooms only to relatives of hospital patients - persons who live in some other part of Massachusetts or the nation and who are visiting here. Rates (Oct. 1979) are $9.00 - $11.00 per night for a single and $14.00 for a double. It is necessary to call well in advance for rooms since the facility is always full. Referrals from hospital social service departments preferred.

(31) Ronald McDonald House
229 Kent Street
Brookline, MA. 02146
734-3333

Hours: Reservations only. See below
-This facility is intended to serve the families of children under treatment for cancer. Each family pays $8.00 a night for the use of a room and may use communal cooking and dining facilities. Families may stay a maximum of 30 days. It is preferred that referrals be made through social service departments in community hospitals. It is intended that the atmosphere be one in which families in crisis may gain support from each other.

SPECIAL RESOURCES

NOTE: The following agencies and services provide assistance to certain types of dishoused families under certain conditions. Potential users should contact these organizations for more information.

(32) Red Cross Disaster Service
Greater Boston Chapter
99 Brookline Avenue
Boston, MA. 02215
262-1234

Hours: 24 hours - Seven days
-Offers emergency housing (at hotels) to persons and families who have been burned out or involved in a major natural disaster such as a windstorm or blizzard. Will pay for temporary housing only for one or two days. Red Cross volunteers are called to fires in which three or more alarms are struck. At smaller fires they are summoned by the fire department only when it is seen that persons involved are in need of emergency housing.

(33) Saint Vincent De Paul
(No single address or telephone number)

Saint Vincent De Paul is a Roman Catholic charitable organization which operates on the parish level in Boston and the surrounding communities. Persons in need must contact the parish in which they reside to obtain help. Not every parish maintains a St. Vincent De Paul Society, but those who do often are able to contribute a small amount of money toward rental and/or a night's lodgings. This assistance is available to any person without regard to creed but is limited by the resources available to a particular parish organization.

(34) Travelers Aid Society of Boston
Main Office
312 Stuart Street
Boston, MA. 02116
542-7286

Hours: 8:45 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Mon-Fri.
11.00 a.m. - 7.00 p.m. Saturdays
-An individual or family traveling through Boston and in financial distress may apply for and receive assistance --- including funds for rental of a room --- if no other resources can be found. In addition a limited number of individuals and families are enrolled in the "Newcomers" program for persons recently come to Boston seeking employment. Eligibility depends upon the individuals, abilities and past work history. Rooms or apartments are rented for these relocatees for a short period of time, ordinarily until they receive their first paycheck.

(35) Veterans Agents
No single address or telephone number

The Massachusetts Department of Veteran's Services oversees a locally operated program of charity for needy veterans and their families. Every city and town in the Commonwealth has an official known as the "Veterans' Agent" who is an employee of the town or city government. These men and women have limited budgets but are sometimes in touch with other sources of charity in the community. Applicants for financial assistance --- including assistance with rental payments --- must be prepared to prove their status as veterans. If this can be proven and if funds are available rental assistance can be provided. Names and telephone numbers of Veterans Agents in specific cities and towns may be obtained from the Information Office of the Department of Veteran's Services, 727-3578.

(36) Homeless Persons Unit
Department of Public Welfare
37 New Chardon Street
Boston, MA. 02114
227-8320

Eligibility for service is limited to adults not presently receiving any type of Public Welfare benefit who might possibly be eligible for General Relief and who have not obtained help from this Unit for at least a year. A rent voucher worth $30.00 will be provided to any such person. He or she must rent a room with this money. Subsequently he or she must go to Boston City Hospital for a medical examination. If a doctor certifies a physical or psychological disability sufficient to prevent employment he or she will be given $61.00 of free food stamps and will be enrolled as a General Relief recipient.